WILAYAH - The Station of the Master

الموسسة العالمية للخدمات الاسلامية
WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
موسسه جهانی خدمات اسلامی

Wilãyah

The Station of the Master

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WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES

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بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ

أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى

سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ

وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.

Dear Reader,

The book you now have in hand is one of the many Islamic publications distributed by this Organization throughout the world in different languages with the aim of conveying the message of Islam to the people of the world.

You may read this book carefully and should you be interested to have further study on such publications you can contact us through a letter. Naturally, if we find you to be a keen and energetic reader we shall give you a deserving response in sending you some other publications of this Organization.

You may express your views on this publication and the subject matter discussed in it, and how far you have benefited from it or which part of the subject matter has proved useful to you and your environment. You will be able, in this manner, to introduce yourself as one of our good and active reader.

Meanwhile, you can keep our address at the disposal of your friends and those individuals interested in Islamic Studies.

Publication Secretary,

World Organization for Islamic Services

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Symbol	*Transliteration*	*Symbol*	*Transliteration*
ء	’	ك	k
ب	b	ل	l
ت	t	م	m
ث	th	ن	n
ج	j	و	w
ح	ḥ	ه	h
خ	kh	ي	y
د	d	ة	ah
ذ	dh		
ر	r		***Long Vowels***
ز	z		
س	s	ا	ā
ش	sh	و	ū
ص	ṣ	ي	ī
ض	ḍ		
ط	ṭ		***Short Vowels***
ظ	ẓ		
ع	‘	ـَ	a
غ	gh	ـُ	u
ف	f	ـِ	i
ق	q		

تصدير

يَسرّنا – و لله الحمد – أن نتولّى نشر التّرجمة الانجليزيّة لكتاب (ولاءها و ولايتها) الّذي وضعه باللّغة الفارسيّة المفكّر الإسلاميّ الكبير العلاّمة المغفور له الشّيخ مرتضى مطهّري تغمدّه الله برحمته.

وصلة مؤسستنا بهذه الترجمة، أنّ المترجم الانجليزيّ للكتاب و هوالأستاذ (يحيى كوپر) الّذي كان يومذاك أحد المهاجرين الى قم لدراسة العلوم الدينيّة عهد الينا بنسخته من التّرجمة الّتي قام بها من النّصّ الفارسيّ. و حيث إنّ نشر الكتاب كان ينسجم و الغاية الّتي نسعى إليها، نظرا لما

في الكتاب من مادّة فكريّة إسلاميّة لا يستهان بها ، و ما للكاتب من مكانة سامية لا يغفل عنها ، عزمنا على نشره ، وكان في النيّة نشر الكتاب خارج ايران – العمل الذي قد نقوم به – و لكن حال دون انجاز العمل موانع لا نريدان نشرح أمرها ، مع أنّ التّصميم على نشر هذا الكتاب كان سابقا على نشر الأثرين الآخرين للعلاّمة المطهّري الّذين نشرنا هما من قبل ، و شاءالله سبحانه أن يتأخّر العمل و أن ننشر الكتاب هنا ، بعون الله و تسديده .

و من الله سبحانه نرجو و إليه نضرع أن يسدّدنا في خطانا وأن يهدينا سواء السّبيل ، إنّه نعم المولى و نعم النّصير.

١٤٠٢/٣/٩ المؤسسة العالمية للخدمات الإسلاميّة

١٩٨٢/١/٥ لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر

طهران ــــ ايران

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

It is a pleasure for us, and all praise to Allah, to undertake the publishing of the English translation of the book *Wala'ha wa wilayatha*, which was written in Persian by the late, great, Islamic thinker Shaykh Murtada Mutahhari - may Allah bestow His Mercy on him.

We came to know of this translation when the English translator of the book, Yahya Cooper, who was then a student of Islamic Sciences in Qum, presented a copy of the translation which he had made from the Persian text.

He has requested us to undertake the publishing of the book, and, since its publication is in full agreement with the goals we are trying

to attain, and the book is centred around a matter of intellectual importance in Islam, which should not be overlooked, and since the high stature of the writer is universally recognized, we decided to publish it. It was intended to publish the book outside Iran, and we had begun to do this; however, obstacles which we do not intend to go into, prevented us from accomplishing this, even though the decision to produce this book had been taken prior to our decision to publish the other two works- of al-`Allamah Mutahhari which have already come out. It is the wish of Allah that this work should be delayed and that it is now that we should publish it with the help of Allah and His guidance.

We pray to Allah to guide our steps and to lead us in the right path, for He is the Best Friend and the Best Helper.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES
(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

9/3/1402
5/1/1982
Tehran - Iran.

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

The present translation is a very short example of the writing of the late Murtada Mutahhari, but it gives a taste of the broad scope of his view of Islam and its dealings with every aspect of human life. Perhaps no other contemporary Iranian writer has managed to write so lucidly and yet paint so large a canvas. It is hoped that further works of his will find their way to a larger public through translation into English.

The present translation was done in the blessed month of *Ramadan 1399,* and the translator would like to thank Dar at-Tabligh al-Islami in Qum for their help and encouragement, and also W.O.F.I.S. for their acceptance for publication.

1400/1980 — Yahya Cooper

Qum - IRAN.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَآ ءَيُّهَا اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لاَ تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ اَوْلِيآءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَتُرِيدُونَ اَنْ تَجْعَلُوا لِلّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَاناً مُبِيناً .

(النسآء، ٤/١٤٤)

O believers, take not the unbelievers as friends instead of the believers; or do you desire to give Allah over you a clear authority? (4:144).

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَ يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ يُطِيعُونَ اَللّٰهَ وَ رَسُولَهُ أُولٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اَللّٰهُ... (التوبة ٩/٧١)...

و أُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. (التوبة ٩/٨٨)

And the believers, the men and the women, are friends (awliya') one of the other; they bid to good and forbid evil; they perform the prayer and pay zakat, and they obey Allah and His Messenger. These, Allah will show mercy to them . . . (9:71) *; . . . and these it is who shall be successful* (ibid., 88).

اِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اَللّٰهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ أَمَنُوا اَلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ اَلصَّلٰوةَ وَ يُؤْتُونَ اَلزَّكٰوةَ وَ هُمْ رَاكِعُونَ. (المائدة ٥/٥٥)

Only Allah is your wali, and His Messenger and those who believe, who keep up prayer and pay zakat while they bow down in prayer (5:55).

THE WORD " WALI "

Wila', walayah, wilayah, wali, mawla. The real, original meaning of all of these words comes from the root-word "waliya" (waw-lam ya). This root-word is among those which appear with the greatest frequency in the Qur'an, being used in various forms: it appears in the Qur'an in 124 places in the noun form, and in 112 places in the verb form.

The original meaning of this root-word, according to the famous Qur'anic lexicon *Mufradatu 'l-Qu'ran,* is "the being situated of something beside something else, in the sense that there is no separation between them", that is to say that if two things are so contiguous one with the other that there is nothing between

them, the root-word "waliya" is used. As a result of this, the word has come to be used in the sense of nearness and affinity, usually to mean a special or spiritual affinity. And again, for the same reason, it has been used with the meaning of "intimacy", "friendship", "being in charge", "being in control", and with other meanings of the same variety. In all of these, there exists a kind of personal contact and contiguity.

For this root-word and its derivatives many meanings are mentioned. For example, 27 meanings are given for the word **mawla** However, it is obvious that this word was not created with 27 meanings, and that in other instances it is used with the sanction of this meaning. The subsequent different meanings, or, to put it more exactly, the numerous instances of usage, should be derived from their syntactical and situational contexts.

The derivatives of this root-word have been used in application to both material, bodily things, and abstract and mental matters, but they were unquestionably used originally in a physical sense, and then, by appropriate comparison with what is visualized, or by abstraction of the perceived meaning from its material and

tangible associations, they also came to be used with abstract meanings. For man's attention to the things he perceives - either from the point of view of a single individual during his own life-time, or from the point of view of a human collectivity during the period of its historical life - predates his meditation on intellectual ideas. After sensory signification and meaning, man moves on little by little to abstract signification and meaning, and he then naturally uses the same words which he employed with the objects of nature and thus recruits them into his service. In a similar way, scientists do not invent special words for their particular sciences, but rather they use words which have a current meaning in the ordinary language giving these words a particular meaning and signification which differ from the common meaning and signification.

The *Mufradatu 'l-Qur'an* says in connection with the word *"walayah/wilayah",* looking at it from the point of view of the instances of its application

" `*Wilayah'* has the meaning of `assistance', but *walayah* has the meaning of `being in charge' and `the person in authority in a certain matter'; it is also said that the meaning of both is the

same, and that it is this `being in charge and having authority' ". Then it mentions instances of the use of these words.

TWO KINDS OF " WILA' "

In the Qur'an, the words wila'. muwalat, and tawalli are used many times. In this great, heavenly book, certain matters are set out under these headings, and, on the whole, it can be seen from contemplation of this Purified Text that from the vantage point of Islam there are two kinds of wila'; negative and positive. That is to say that on the one hand Muslims are ordered not to accept one kind of wila' and to leave it alone, while, on the other hand, they are shown another kind of wila' which they are to cultivate diligently.

"Wila", affirmative and Islamic, is in turn of two kinds: general wila', and special wila'. This special wila' is also of several different kinds. These are: a wila' of love, a wila' of Imamate, a wila' of social leadership, and a wila' of universal disposal. Here briefly, we shall discuss each one of these.

1. NEGATIVE " WILA' "

The Qur'an strongly warns Muslims against accepting fellowship with, and protection from, non-Muslims: not that it takes a bad view of love for other human beings, or supports hatred by Muslims against non-Muslims in all circumstances, or is against kindness towards them. The Qur'an explicitly says

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ ٱللهُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ
مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ انْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَ تُقْسِطُوآ اِلَيْهِمْ اِنَّ ٱللهَ يُحِبُّ
الْمُقْسِطِينَ. (الممتحنة ، ٦٠/٨)

> ***Allah*** *does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, and that you show them kindness and deal with them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice* (60:8).

Islam does not say that acts of friendship and works of good must be done exclusively for Muslims, and that in no way should generosity be extended from you towards others. How could a religion whose Prophet is, according to the Qur'an, "a mercy for the worlds" (21:107) be like that?

The matter is, however, that Muslims must not be inattentive towards their enemy, some of whom secretly harbour duplicity towards them. The pretension of friendship by the enemy towards Muslims should not deceive them, and it must not cause them to take the enemy for a friend and to trust him.

The Muslim must always be aware that he is a member of Islamic society, that he is a part of this whole; and his being part of this whole, a member of one body, necessitates, whether you like it or not, conditions and limits. The non-Muslim is a member of another body.

The relationship of a member of the body of Islam with members of non-Islamic bodies must be of such a kind that, at the very least, it does not compromise his membership of the Islamic body; in other words, it must not damage the unity and independence of that body. Thus, like it or not, the relation of a Muslim with a non-Muslim cannot be equal with, or, even sometimes, closer than the relation of a Muslim with a Muslim.

The friendly and sincere relationship of Muslims with one another must be within the limit that membership of one body and par ticipation in one whole requires. Wila' of the negative sort in Islam expresses the fact that a Muslim should always realize in an encounter with a non-Muslim that he is encountering a member of an alien body, and the meaning of saying that there must not be wila' with non-Muslims is that the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims must be within the limit of the relationship between Muslims themselves, which means that a Muslim should not accept membership of a non-Muslim body; or, put in other words, his membership of the Islamic body should not be ignored.

Thus, there is no inconsistency in a Muslim

being benevolent and kind towards a non-Muslim and at the same time not accepting his wila' (allegiance with him), that is to say that the Muslim must not count him a member of the body of which he himself is a member, and should behave towards him as an outsider.

In the same way, there is no inconsistency between wila' in the negative sense and the fundamental of humanitarianism and compassion for mankind. The essential condition of humanitarianism is that man should be concerned with the fate, well-being and true happiness of all men. It is for this very reason that every Muslim is concerned that all human beings should become Muslims and be led to the right path. However, as long as this blessing is not obtained, those others who have been blessed must not be sacrificed for those who have not been blessed, and permit boundaries to collapse and every kind of action and reaction to take place.

Imagine that a certain group of men are afflicted with a certain illness. Humanitarianism requires that we come to their rescue, and as long as rescue is not forthcoming to them, it requires that we be benevolent towards them. However, humanitarianism does not demand

that we impose no restrictions between these people whose illness, it so happens, is contagious, and individuals who are healthy or have been cured. Thus it is that Islam, on the one hand, counts generosity and kindness towards non-Muslims as permissible, but, on the other hand, does not permit that a Muslim should accept the protection (wila') of a non-Muslim.

Islam is the religion of humanitarianism; Islam even loves the one who associates others with Allah *(mushrik),* not from the point of view that he is a *mushrik,* but from the point of view that he is a created being, one of God's creatures, and Islam is concerned for the reason that he has fallen into the way of ruin and confusion, and the way of liberation and bliss has been made narrow. For if it did not love him, Islam would be indifferent to his *shirk* and misery.

In Islam there is love and hatred, but a love and hatred which is reasonable and logical, not sentimental, for no good reason, and without any standard of comparison. A friendship or enmity which arises solely from the feelings has no logic; it is sentimental, blind and deaf, and it dominates the human heart, it tugs in any direction it wishes. But rational love and hatred

arise from a kind of understanding, and in fact result from affection for the fate of other people, and this is an instance of genuine affection.

Here is an example: A father and a mother have two sorts of affection towards their child; one is reasonable and logical, the other senti mental. Reasonable affection sometimes causes the parents in all seriousness to subject their own child to suffering, and they consider all the reasons for causing him pain. Let us say they put their child in the hands of a surgeon. The parents, in such a case, fall to weeping, they feel greatly afflicted and tears pour from their eyes; but they want the doctor to start the operation as soon as possible. They ask him to remove the troublesome part. The weeping is the result of sentimental emotions, but their demand is the result of reasonable emotion.

If those parents had taken heed of their present grief, and if their sentimental emotions had taken precedence over their rational emo tions and they had not allowed one of their child's limbs to be cut, they would in fact have been consenting to his death.

But with the logic of the intellect and the verdict of the affections about the fate of their child, they put aside their feelings and submit

the child to pain and torment.

Every rational man may occasionally, in order to cure his own pain, put himself in the hands of a surgeon who may, for example, remove his finger. In his heart, he does not want to suffer the pain of having his finger cut off, and, of course, he will be extraordinarily unhappy to lose it. However, he will endure this pain in a rational way, and, following the verdict of his mind, will submit to the loss of the part; clearly it is logic and his intellect which lead him forward and bring the request to his tongue, otherwise his feelings would have caused him to reverse his verdict.

In the case of a corrupt, unreformed society in which unbelief and ignorance rule, Islam, on the one hand, gives the command to *jihad* so that the corruption may be uprooted;

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لاَ تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ (البقرة، ٢/١٩٣)

Kill them, so that calamity is no longer (2:193).

On the other hand, it orders vigilence and avoidance, so that people do not reveal what is in their hearts to them (the unbelievers), so that

the community and mankind remains healthy; and this is not in the least incompatible with humanitarianism.

The nature of man is a thief; appropriating and seizing things are human characteristics, and how many times has unawareness of the thoughts and deliberations of others been enscribed on men's tombstones. The Qur'an exhorts us

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ.

(الممتحنة ، ٦٠/١)

O believers, take not My enemy and your enemy for friends (wali), *offering them love, though they have disbelieved in the truth that has come to you* (60:1).

إِنْ يَثْقَفُوكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَ

وَأَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ. (الممتحنة ، ٦٠/٢)

If they find you, they will be your enemies, and will stretch forth towards you their

hands and their tongues with evil, and they ardently desire that you may disbelieve (60:2).

Here the Qur'an considers the secret of vigilance towards, and avoidance of, the outsider; it is that the latter wishes others to enter into his faith and religion. What a great danger there is, then, for his companion in his show of friendship and his camaraderie.

It is here that the Qur'an affirms the original source of the danger. When these people befriend, it is not merely friendship and acquaintance, for they expend great effort to reach their goal and try hard in all ways.

All that we have discussed affirms that the relationship between a Muslim and a non-Muslim must be a prudent one, that a Muslim must not remain inattentive to danger, that he must not forget that he is a member of a society of *tawhid,* and that the non-Muslim is a member of another body and another social group. But none of these things necessitates that the Muslim should completely cut off relations with the non-Muslim, that he should not foster any social, economic or even sometimes political relations. Of course, all this is conditional on their totally coinciding with the interest of the Islamic society.

2. WILA', IN A POSITIVE SENSE, WITH A GENERAL MEANING.

Islam wishes Muslims to live as a single, independent form, to always have order, inter-communication and sociality, every individual aware of himself as being a member of one body which is Islamic society itself, so that this Islamic society becomes strong and powerful, in the way that the Qur'an wants the society of Muslims to be superior to other societies.

وَلاَ تهِنُوا وَلاَ تَحْزَنُوا وَاَنْتُمْ الأَعْلَوْنَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤمِنينَ

(آل عمران ، ۳/۱۳۹)

And be not infirm, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers (3 :139).

Faith is the supreme support, but what does faith do? Faith is the support, the force and the pillar of the character, the maintainer of the independence and the motor of the movement of Islamic society.

Elsewhere the Qur'an says:

وَلاَ تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ (الانفال ، ٨/٤٦)

And do not quarrel together, for then you will be weak in heart and your power will depart (8:46).

Quarrelling and disputation destroy the being and character of Islamic society. Faith is the foundation of the friendship, love and fraternity wila' of the believers.

The Qur'an says

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ. (التوبة ، ٩/٧١)

And the believers, the men and the women, are friends (wali) *one to the other; they bid to good and forbid evil* (9:71) .

Believers are close to each other, and the cause of their being close to each other is that

they are the protectors, friends and helpers of each other; they are concerned with each others future; in fact, they cultivate concern in their own future in which they form one unity, and therefore they "bid to good " and dissuade each other from evil and wickedness.

These two activities - bidding to good and forbidding evil - result from the friendship of faith, and so together these two are situated immediately after the explanation of the wila' of faith.

A feeling for the future of individuals springs from affection for them in themselves. A father who has affection for his children naturally feels concern for their future. But perhaps he has no feelings towards other people's children in themselves. Therefore, he will have no affection towards them in themselves until he has also a concern for their future, and their doing good awakens in him a positive feeling, and their doing bad a negative feeling.

Bidding to good is a consequence of this positive feeling, and forbidding evil is a consequence of the negative feeling, and, until love and friendship exist, these feelings do not bring joy to a man's heart.

If a man is without affection for individ-

uals, he is indifferent when faced with their actions and behaviour, but when he is concerned, his loves and friendships will not leave him in peace. Thus, in the noble *ayah* (verse) bidding to good and forbidding evil are connected in a particular way to the question of wila'.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (التوبة ، ٩/٧١)

And the believers, the men and women, are wali one to the other, they bid to good and forbid evil (9:71).

Afterwards, under the subject of the fruits of bidding to good and forbidding evil, two subjects are mentioned:

يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ (التوبة ٩/٧١)

They perform prayer, and pay zakat (9: 71).

Prayer is an example of the relationship of the created with the Creator. And *zakat is* an example of the benefit of relations between Muslims themselves, who support each other as a result of being compassionate and merciful within Islam. And afterwards, it branches out from this

أُولٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ ٱللّٰهُ... (التوبة ٩ / ٧١) ... وَ أُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (التوبة ، ٩/٨٨)

These, Allah will show mercy to them. . . (9:71) *; . . . and these it is who shall be succesful* (ibid., 88).

It is then that various Divine mercies and joys come down on this society, and thus they become a people who deserve to be called free.

Later we shall give some explanations of this *ayah,* showing that it, and some other *ayat* (verses) which mention wila' in its ordinary affirmative sense, are not only witnesses to love and friendship, but that they affirm a kind of obligation and responsibility for Muslims, as far as the virtue of the relationship of Muslims with each other is concerned.

The Prophet - may Allah bless and grant him and his family peace - said in a famous and established *hadith:*

مَثَلُ ٱلْمُؤمِنينَ في تَوادُدِهِمْ وَ تَراحُمِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ ٱلجَسَدِ إِذا اشْتَكى بَعْضٌ تَداعى لَهُ سائِرُ اَعْضاءِ جَسَدِهِ بِالْحُمّى وَٱلسَّهَرِ:

Believers, in loving one another and being merciful towards each other, are like the body who, when a part of it complains, the other parts rally to it by fever and sleeplessness.

The noble Qur'an says, regarding the Prophet and those who follow him and have received Islamic education

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ اَشِدّاءُ عَلَى الكُفّارِ رُحَمآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ .

(الفتح ، ٤٨/٢٩)

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves (48:29).

In this *ayah,* allusion is made to wila' in the negative sense and wila' in the positive sense. Just as we said earlier that the *dydt* of the Qur'an draw our attention towards the fact that the enemies of Islam, in every age, try to substitute negative wila' for positive wila', and vice versa; or in other words, they direct all their efforts to the end that relations between Muslims and non-Muslims should be cordial, and that relations between Muslims themselves, for various reasons, through all the disputes of the sects, should be hostile.

In our own time, a great number of actions have been carried out by outsiders, enormous budgets deployed, and regretfully they have introduced elements who have no other work than to transform wila' in the negative Islamic sense into a wila' in an affirmative sense, and affirmative Islamic wila' into a negative wila'. This is the greatest blow which these wicked people have dealt against the Prophet.

Today, if we should weep over one disaster from among those assailing Islam, and if we should shed tears over one tragedy from among those befalling Islam, it is this disaster and this tragedy. Amiru'l-mu'minin, `Ali (a.s.)* said:

فَيَا عَجَباً وَاللهِ يُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ وَيَجْلِبُ الْهَمَّ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ هٰؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ عَلَى بَاطِلِهِمْ وَتَفَرُّقِكُمْ عَنْ حَقِّكُمْ.

How strange it is! By Allah, it mortifies the heart and draws forth grief that these people

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* (a.s.) : is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase *`alay-hi/-ha/-himu 's-salam* (peace be upon him/her/them).

agreed about their falsehood and you disagree about your truth. *(Nahju 'l-balaghah)*

O Allah, protect and guard Islam and the Muslims from the evil of these evil-doers through the truth of Muhammad and his Pure Household!

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنّا نَشْكُو اِلَيْكَ فَقْدَ نَبِيِّنا صَلَواتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَغَيْبَةَ
وَلِيِّنا وَكَثْرَةَ عَدُوِّنا وَقِلَّةَ عَدَدِنا وَشِدَّةَ الْفِتَنِ بِنا وَتَظاهُرَ الزَّمانِ
عَلَيْنا فَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَاَعِنّا عَلَى ذٰلِكَ بِفَتْحٍ مِنْكَ
تُعَجِّلُهُ وَنَصْرٍ تُعِزُّهُ وَسُلْطانِ حَقٍّ تُظْهِرُهُ وَرَحْمَةٍ مِنْكَ
تُجَلِّلُناها وَعافِيَةٍ مِنْكَ تُلْبِسُناها.

O Allah, we complain to You over the loss of our Prophet - Your blessings on him and his family - and on the absence of our *wali,* the abundance of our enemy and the paucity of our number, over the strain of afflictions on us and time's turning against us. So, bless Muhammad and his family, and help us in this by a victory which You will hasten, and a help which You will strengthen, and an authority of truth which You will manifest, and a compassion You will envelop us in, and a well-being You will clothe us in.

WILA' IN A POSITIVE SENSE, WITH A SPECIAL MEANING

Wila' in its positive, special sense is the wila' of *Ahlu 'l-bayt,* the Household of the Prophet. There can be no room for debate over the fact that the noble Prophet has called and directed the Muslims to a kind of wila' in connection with his pure, sinless family; that is to say that even scholars from the Sunni sect make no controversy over this. The *ayah* of the pure relatives:

قُلْ لآ أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْراً اِلاَّ الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبَى.

(الشورى ، ٤٢/٢٣)

Say: "I do not ask of you any reward for it but love of my near relatives" (42: 23),

sets down the matter of wila' in its special meaning. And it is also present in the famous and uncontested *hadith* of Ghadiri, where it is said:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلاهُ فَهذا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلاهُ

For whomsoever I am his *mawla, `Ali is* his *mawla.*

This itself is mention of a kind of wila' which will be explained later.

A noble *ayah* says:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلٰوةَ
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ. (المائدة ، ٥/٥٥)

Only Allah is your Wali, and His Messenger and those who believe, who keep up prayer and pay zakat while they bow in prayer (5:55).

The different schools are of one opinion, that this was revealed concerning `Ali (a.s.) . at-Tabari cites many *ahadith* in this connection[2], and az-Zamakhshari, who was one of the greatest scholars of the Sunni school, said in a definitive manner

"This *ayah* was revealed concerning `Ali,

and the reason for the plural being used (i.e., those), although that about which it was revealed was not more than one person, is that it is exhorting people to behave like this; and it explains that believers should acquire character and qualities like this, and should be eager and fervent in this way in doing good and in generosity and in helping the poor, and that even in prayer they should not procrastinate."' (i.e., although they may be in prayer when the matter of *zakat* arises, they should not delay, and should perform their obligation during the time of prayer.)

Also Fakhru'd-Din ar-Razi, who, like az-Zamakhshari, is one of the great men of the Sunni school and of the whole community, said:

"This *ayah* was revealed concerning `Ali, and scholars are all in agreement that the payment of *zakat* in the time of ruku` (the position of bowing down in prayer) did not take place except in the case of 'Ali."'

Towards the end he makes some contention about the interpretation of the word wali, and later on we will discuss the meaning of this *ayah.*

`Ali ibn Hammad al-`Adwi al-Basri al-Baghdadi, known as Ibn Hammad, one of the Shi'ah

poets of the fourth century of the hegira (10th/ 11th century A.D.) points to the present meaning in the following poem

قـرن الالـه ولاءه بـــولائـــه
مما تـزكـى و هـو حـان يـركـع
سماه رب الـعـرش نـفس محمـد
يـوم البهـال و ذاك مالا يـدفـع

God brought the wila' of Ali and His wila',
Because Ali, in the time of ruku , gave zakat.
The Lord of the Throne gave him the name of `the soul of Muhammad'
On the day of cursing. And this is an indisputable fact.[5 & 6]

As we said before, a kind of wila' has been prescribed in Islam that is positive and has an ordinary meaning, and the noble *ayah;*

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعضٍ.

(التوبة ، ٩/٧١)

And the believers, the men and the women, are wali one to the other (9:71) .

is a witness to this kind of wila'.

Now we wish to say that the noble ayah;

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ . (المائدة، ٥/٥٥)

Only Allah is your Wali. . . (5:55).

states the matter in such a way that it does not carry universality. In no way is it possible that this *ayah* was designed as a statement of wila' with its ordinary, positive meaning, because the Qur'an here is not aiming to state a universal law; it does not seek to set down the desirability or the necessity of paying *zakat* at the time of ruku `, and lay it down as a duty, something recommended legally in the Islamic sense as a kind of law of the *shad `ah .* Rather, it is a reference to an action that took place when someone did something in the external world, and now the Qur'an established that action to indicate the person, and in an indirect way affirms its decree which is this very wila' in its special meaning.

This way of saying something, when a particular event pertaining to a specific individual is expressed using a plural, is not uncommon in the Qur'an. For example:

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الأَذَلَّ .

(المنافقون ، ٦٣/٨)

They say: "If we return to Medina the mightier ones of it will surely drive out the more abased therefrom" (63 :8).

Here also, the Qur'an is referring to a story which actually took place, and it say *yaquluna* (they say) although the speaker was not more than one person - `Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul.

The giving of *zakat* during *ruku`* was not something commonplace among the Muslims, as a result of which we might say that the Qur'an praises them all and affirms *wilayah* - in whatever sense we say it - for everyone. This very matter is a living witness that the reference of the *ayah is* individual and specific, in other words that there was someone who, while in *ruku`* and while in worship, was still not inattentive to the slaves of Allah and thus did something, and now the Qur'an tells us: "He, also, like Allah and His Prophet, is your wali. "Therefore, a particular person is being discussed, and he, like Allah and the Messenger, is also the wali of the believers, and the believers must accept his *wila'.*

However, what is the purpose of this wila'? Is it only a specific love and devotion which people should have towards that respected person, or is it higher than that? It is this matter that we shall be discussing before long. For the time being, let it suffice to say that contrary to the fancy of some of the scholars of the Sunni school, the sense of this ayah is wila' with a special meaning, not wila' in its ordinary sense.

THE KINDS OF WILA IN ITS POSITIVE SENSE, WITH A SPECIAL MEANING

So far, as has been noted, the matter of the wila' of `Ali (a. s.) and the rest of the Household of the Prophet is in general, not open to doubt. Ultimately, the controversy lies in what is the intended meaning of *wila'* in this *ayah,* and in the rest of the dydt and in the *ahadith* (traditions) of the Prophet which were gathered together with it. In order that the meaning should be clear, we consider it necessary to discuss the special uses of the words wila' and *wilayah* in the Qur'an and the *sunnah* which have reference to the Household (of the Prophet). These two words are normally used in four different ways.

A. The Wila' of Love (*mahabbah*) or The Wila' of Nearness (*qarabah*)

The wila' of love, or the wila' of nearness, signifies that the Household are the near relatives of the noble Prophet, and that people are recommended to cultivate affection for them and to love them in a special way, over and above the necessity for wila' in its ordinary positive sense. This is in the Qur'an, and many *ahadith* have also been recorded through Shi'ah and Sunni schools about this subject, that love of the Household, and, among them, of `Ali (a.s.), is one of the basic precepts of Islam; and in this connection two problems immediately crop up.

Firstly, why, with special reference to the Household, has all this been recommended: that people should cultivate devotion to them? And is this love and devotion a means of approaching near to God? Suppose that everyone is acquainted with the Household of the Prophet, and that they truly have love and devotion towards them, what is the result and benefit of this? All Islamic precepts have a philosophical and metaphysical reason behind them. If a certain precept turns up in the context of Islam,

it absolutely must have its own philosophy and metaphysics.

The answer to this problem is that the exhortation to love the Household and other expressions of the wila' of love of the House hold do have a special metaphysics; it is not an extravagance or a foolishness, it is not (merely) a reward for the noble Prophet or for themselves. The noble Qur'an makes it clear through the mouth of the Prophet that the benefit of the recompense that he is asking from us, in other words love of his near relatives, accrues to us ourselves.

The wila' of love is an introduction and a way to other kinds of wila' which we want to explain. The bond of love is what really joins people to the Household so that they can benefit from their existence, from what they have left behind, from what they have said and what they have taught, and from their behaviour and their manner.

In our book *Jadhibah wa dafi`ah-e Ali (alayhi 's-salam)*, we have discussed at length the virtues of love and devotion towards the pure ones, and the ones near to Allah *(al-Haqq)*, which fashion man and are precious agents in training and stimulating his spirit and trans-

forming his state of mind, and here we shall not repeat ourselves.

Secondly, is the wila' of love a peculiarity of the Shi`ahs, or is it also believed in by other Islamic groups?

In answer, it must be said that the wila' of love is not a peculiarity of Shi `ites. Other Muslim groups also give importance to it. al-Imam ash-Shafi'i, who is one of the Imams of the Sunni schools, wrote in his famous poems:

يا راكبا قف بالمحصب من منى
واهتف بساكن خيفها والناهض
سحرا اذا فاض الحجيج الى منى
فيضا كملتطم الفرات الفائض
ان كان رفضا حب آل محمد
فليشهد الثقلان انى رافضى

O rider, standing on the stony ground of Mind:
Cry at dawn to those stopped at Khif[8]
and those bestirring,
When the pilgrims are leaving for Mind,
Moving like the rolling of the waves of
the surging Euphrates:

If love of the Household of Muhammad is a heresy (rafd)
Then, jinn and men, bear witness that I am a heretic (Rafidite) ! [9]

He also wrote

يـا آل بيت رسول الله حبكـــم
فـرض مـن الله فـى القـرآن انـزلـه
يكفيكـم من عظيـم الفخـر انكـم
من لـم يصـل عليكم لا صلاة لـه

O Household of the Messenger of Allah, love for you
Is an obligation from Allah, revealed in the Qur'an.
It suffices as the greatest honour bestowed on you,
That his prayer is as nothing who does not include in it praises to you.

Again, he wrote

و لما رايت الناس قد ذهبت بهم
مذاهبهم فى ابحر الغى والجهل
ركبت على اسم الله فى سفن النجا
وهم اهل بيت المصطفى خاتم الرسل

و امسکت حبل الله و هو ولاؤهم
کما قد امرنا بالتمسک بالحبل

When I saw people being taken
Through their madhahib [10] *into seas of erring and ignorance,*
I set sail in the name of Allah in the ship of deliverance
Which is the Household of Mustafa, the Seal of the Prophets;
I grasped the rope of Allah which is their wila',
As we were commanded to grasp the rope. [11]

az-Zamakhshari and Fakhru 'd-Din ar-Razi, who, in the matter of the succession to the caliphate, come down against the Shi `ahs, are themselves narrators of *hadith* on the subject of the wila' of love. ar-Razi quotes from az-Zamakhshari that the Prophet said

أَلا ومَنْ ماتَ عَلى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ماتَ شَهيداً ، الاوَمَنْ ماتَ عَلى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ماتَ مَغْفُوراً لَهُ ، الا وَمَنْ ماتَ عَلى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ماتَ تائِباً ، الا وَمَنْ ماتَ عَلى حُبِّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ماتَ مُؤمِناً مُسْتَكْمِلَ الايمانِ...

Whosoever died in love of the Household of Muhammad has died a martyr;
Whosoever died in love of the Household of Muhammad has died in forgiveness;
Whosoever died in love of the Household of Muhammad has died a believer and in the perfection of his faith."

Amiru 'l-mu'minin (a. s.) has also said in *Nahju 'l-balaghah,* Sermon 232:

فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ مَاتَ مِنْكُمْ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ وَهُوَ عَلَى مَعْرِفَةِ حَقِّ رَبِّهِ وَحَقِّ رَسُولِهِ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ مَاتَ شَهِيداً وَوَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللهِ وَاسْتَوْجَبَ ثَوَابَ مَا نَوَى مِنْ صَالِحِ عَمَلِهِ وَقَامَتِ النِّيَّةُ مَقَامَ إِصْلَاتِهِ لِسَيْفِهِ.

Whosoever from among you dies in his bed in knowledge of the truth of his own Lord and the truth of His Messenger and his Household, has died a martyr and his reward is with Allah. He will deserve the reward for the intention of his righteous actions, and the intention will take place of the unsheathing of the sword.

Ibnu l-Farid, the famous Egyptian Sufi and poet (in Arabic literature, he is the equivalent of Hafiz in the Persian language), has said in

his famous *ghazal* which begins with the couplet "Driver of the caravans, passing through the desert: With the measured pace of thy goodness, ascend the dunes of Tayy."

ذهب العمر ضياعا وانقضى
باطلا ان لم افز منک بشی

عترة المبعوث حقا من قصی

Life dwindles away wastefully and ends in futility
If I do not attain union with you.
Apart from this one thing I hold nothing, but connection
To the wila' of the family (of the Prophet) *who was appointed from the descendents of Qusayy.*

Here, perhaps, his meaning is wila' in a most sublime sense, but it is indisputable that he mentions wila' in the sense of love. `Abdu'r-Rahman Jami[13], about whom al-Qadi Nurullah[14] said "two `Abdu'r-Rahmans have injured `Ali - `Abdu 'r-Rahman ibn Muljam al-Muradi [15] and `Abdu 'r-Rahman Jami", arranged in Persian the famous poem of al-Farazdaq[16] in praise of

al-Imam Zaynu'l-`Abidin (a.s.). It is said that someone reported from a dream that after the death of al-Farazdaq they had asked him in the dream: "What did Allah do with you?" He replied: "He forgave me on account of that poem I recited in praise of `Ali ibn al-Husayn." Jami himself adds to this and says: "If God forgave all men for the sake of this poem, it would not be surprising!" Jami says of Hisham ibn `Abdu'1-Malik who imprisoned al-Farazdaq and tortured him

اگـرش چشم راست‌بیـن بــودی
راست کردار و راست‌دیـن بودی
دست بی‌داد و ظلـم نگشادی
جـای آن حبس خلعتش دادی

If he had had right-seeking eyes,
Had done goodness and had had true din.
He would not have opened his hand to in-
justice and oppression -
Instead of imprisonment he would have
given his robe of honour.

Therefore the Shi'ah and the Sunni do not have different views about wila' meaning love, except for the Naasibi who hated the Household

of the Prophet, were excluded from Islamic society, and were, like the unbelievers, condemned to vileness, and from the defilement of whose existence, praise be to Allah, the world has become cleaned in this age. Only a few people are now occasionally seen who write the odd book still endeavouring to increase the gaps between Muslims; and thereare few among ourselves. And this is the best evidence that they have no authenticity, and that, like their associates from amongst us, they are the tools of the infernal colonialists.

az-Zamakhshari and ar-Razi, in a footnote to the previous *hadith,* narrate from the Prophet that he said: .

اَلاٰ وَمَنْ مٰاتَ عَلىٰ بُغْضِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ مٰاتَ كٰافِراً ، اَلاٰ وَمَنْ
مٰاتَ عَلىٰ بُغْضِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ لَمْ يَشُمَّ رٰائِحَةَ الجَنَةِ .

Whosoever dies in enmity to the family of Muhammad, dies an unbeliever. Whosoever dies in enmity of the family of Muhammad, will not smell the scent of Paradise.

And al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

فَإِنَّ اَللهَ تَبارَكَ وَ تَعالىٰ لَمْ يَخْلُقْ خَلقاً اَنْجَسَ مِنَ الكَلبِ
وَإِنَّ اَلنّاصِبَ لَنا أَهْلِ البَيْتِ لَانْجَسُ مِنْهُ.

Allah has not created anything more unclean than the dog; and those who oppose us, the Household, are more unclean than that.

We must call this kind of wila', if it is attributed to the Household of the Prophet (we call them those who are `entrusted with wila'), the wila' of nearness; and if we attribute it to Muslims, from the point of view of an obligation that they have concerning affection for the Household, then we should say wila' of love.

This is obviously not the place to go into how the root-word wila' has come to be used in the sense of love . . . but two more aspects should be considered. One is whether the word wali has been used in the sense of friend or not? The other concerns which meaning is intended when the word wali is used in connection with the ayah of the Qur'an: "Surely Allah is your wali . . ." (5:55) which established the wilayah of Amiru 'l-mu'minin.

Some believe that in the Qur'an, everywhere this word is used (and it does at first seem as if this is the case), that it has the mean ing of `friend'. But with attention it is realized that it does not mean this. For example, the meaning of

اَللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ.

(البقرة، ٢/٢٥٧)

Allah is the wall of those who believe, He brings them out of darkness into light (2:257),

is not that Allah is the friend of the believers; rather that Allah, through His own special providence, has the ranks of the believers in His hands. Similarly, the meaning of

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

(يونس، ١٠/٦٢)

Now surely the awliya' of Allah - they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve (10:62)

is not that there is no fear for the friends of Allah. Here the word *wali* is in the form of "fa`il" (subject) with the meaning of *"maf'ul"* (object)17. So the

meaning thus becomes: "Those whose guardian, and the master of whose affairs is Allah are not subject to fear and apprehension" (10:62). Similarly, the meaning of the *ayah:* "And the believers, the men and the women, are *awliya'* one to the other" (9:71), is not that the believers are each others friends; rather that the believers are under a mutual obligation to one another, and are occupied with each other's affairs, and considerate of each other's future. So afterwards it says: "Bidding to good and forbidding evil."

From here the answer to the second question becomes clear. In the *ayah* under discussion, the meaning is not that Allah and the **Prophet** and **`Ali** are your friends; rather that they are the holders of authority and the ones with the right to be the masters of your affairs.

So, although the idea that the word *wali* is used with the meaning of friend is correct, it is inconceivable that it should be restrictively used to mean that Allah, the Prophet and `Ali are nothing but your friends.

From this it becomes obvious that the explanation by some of the Sunni commentators is wrong when they say that the substance of this *ayah* is not something important, rather that it just means that `Ali is your friend, and

that `Ali must be loved by you and be the object of your affections (because it is in the form `fa`il' with the meaning of *`maf`ul'*).

According to this proof, the *ayah:* "And Allah is your *wali. . ."*(5:55) which uses *wali* in the positive special sense, is not just *wali* in the sense of love. It is greater than this. So what kind of wila' is it? The explanation that will be given now will clarify this matter.

B. Wila' - Imamate

Wila' meaning Imamate and leadership; or, in other words, the position of authority in the *din* (to which matters are referred for decision), that is, a position which others should follow, should take as an example for their actions and behaviour, from whom they should learn the precepts of the din; or yet again, supremacy *(za`amah)*. Such a position is necessarily one of immunity from sin *(`ismah),* and the speech and actions of such a person are a guarantee and a proof for others. It is this same position about which the noble Qur'an, when talking of the Prophet, says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللهَ

والْيَوْمَ الأَخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللهَ كَثِيراً. (الاحزاب ، ٢١/٣٣)

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah a good example for whosoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much (33:21).

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحبِبْكُمُ اللهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

(آل عمران ، ٣١/٣)

Say: if you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins (3:31).

In this *ayah,* the Messenger of Allah is introduced as an examplar to whose behaviour and morality people should conform their own behaviour and morality, and whom they should take as their precedent. And this in itself is a proof of the Prophet's immunity from sin and error, because, if it were possible for sin and error to proceed from him, there would be no purpose in Allah, the Sublime, introducing him as a leader and a precedent.

This position then, after the Prophet, passed to the Household, and, according to a *hadith* which many Sunni scholars have narrated

in books on the life of the Prophet, in histories, and in their own books on *hadith* from nearly thirty companions of the Prophet[18], the Prophet chose his Household for the leadership and Imamate. He said:

اِنّي تارِكٌ فيكُمُ اَلثَّقَلَيْنِ : كِتابَ اَللهِ وَ عِتْرَتي اَهْلَ بَيْتي ،
وَ اِنَّهُما لَنْ يَفْتَرِقا حَتّى يَرِدا عَلَيَّ اَلْحَوْضَ ، فَلا تَقَدَّمُوهُما
فَتَهْلِكوا ، وَلا تَقْصُروا عَنْهُما فَتَهْلِكوا ، وَلا تُعَلِّمُوهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ
اَعْلَمُ مِنْكُمْ .

I leave among you two precious things: the Book of Allah and my Household. These two will not be separated until they encounter me at the pool of Kawthar (in Paradise). Do not run ahead of them, for you will be ruined; do not neglect them, for you will be ruined. And do not seek to instruct them, for they are wiser than you.

Allah appoints, and Allah says about His Book:

لا يَأْتِيهِ الْباطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ .

(فصلت ، ٤١/٤٢)

Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it (41:42).

So, if the Household were associates of falseness and unrighteousness and ignorance, and thus ceased to be the complement and twin of the Book, and if they were not, like the Prophet, preserved and free from sin and error, they would not have become the leaders and examplars in his place. The subject matter of the *hadith* shows that those mentioned in it must be individuals preserved from sin, and, as Khwajah Nasiru 'd-Din at-Tusi said, the others (i.e., the non- Shi 'ahs) neither have anyone who is protected from sin, nor do they claim this protection for anybody, and so, apart from the pure Imams, the *hadith* has no applicability.

Ibn Hajar (al-Haytami) says:

"This saying of the Prophet - `Do not run ahead of them, for you will be ruined; do not neglect them, for you will be ruined; and do not seek to instruct them, for they are wiser than you' - is a proof that whoever from the Household reaches the highest degree of knowledge, and merits the taking on of religious duties, is to be preferred before others." [19]

al-Hafiz Abu Nu'aym narrates a *hadith* from Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet said:

"Whoever wishes that his life and death be like mine, and that he rest in eternal Paradise, should choose `Ali as wali after me, and take his wali as wali, and should follow the Imams after me for they are my descendants and were created from my clay. They are gifted with understanding and knowledge. Woe unto those who deny their virtues and who alienate them in kinship from me, for my intercession will never include them." [20]

Imamate and leadership in *din,* in such a sense that whatever the leader says and whatever he does is taken as a Divine guarantee and a proof, is a kind of wilayah, because it is an example of the right to govern, direct and control the affairs of man.

Anyway, every teacher and mentor, in so far as he is a teacher and mentor, is a wali, an authority and a master of the affairs of the learner and student. What does the teacher and the mentor have, that this right should not be given to someone sent by Allah?

The glorious ayah: "Only Allah is your Wali and His Messenger, and those who believe, who keep up prayer and pay *zakat* while they bow in *ruku*' " (5:55), is a witness to this kind of *wilayah*. Of course, this does not mean that

this ayah does not contain some other meaning of wilayah which we shall mention later on. It means that this ayah encompasses wila' in the sense of Imamate, leadership and mastery over the *din.* This word wali, was also used in some of the ahadith that have been quoted in the sense of wali - Imamate.

This kind of wila', then, if it is used in connection with the Imam, means the right to leadership and mastery in the *din,* but if it is used in connection with an ordinary individual, it means acceptance of and compliance with this right.

C. Wila' - Za'amah.

Wila', in the sense of za`amah, is the right to social and political leadership. Society needs a leader. That person who takes the reins of the government of a society and directs the social affairs of man, carries the destinies of the people, and is the ruler (waliyyu 'l-amr) of the Muslims. The Prophet, during his lifetime, was the waliyyu 'l-amr of the Muslims, and Allah granted him this position; and after him, according to a great deal of irrefutable evidence, it passed to the Household.

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ.

(النساء ٤/٥٩)

Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority over you (4:59).

Similarly, the first *ayah* of *surah* al-Ma'idah and the *hadith* of Ghadir, together with the whole of the *ayah:* "Certainly Allah is your *Wali . . ."* (5:55), and the whole of the *ayah :*

النَّبِيُّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ. (الاحزاب ، ٣٣/٦)

The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers thant they have on themselves (33:6),

concern the same kind of *wilayah.*

In so far as the Prophet did have such a rank, and in so far as this unique rank was a Divine one, that it to say, it was a Divine ob ligation with which Allah had favoured the Prophet, and it was not conferred on him by the people, thus far there is no argument be- tween the Shi`ahs and Sunnis; upto this point our Sunni brothers are with us. The problem now arises as to what, after the Prophet, was

the commandment concerning wilayah-za`*amah.*

In order that there should be no social instability, and that chaos should not intervene, individual people must submit to someone who is worthy to be called the ruler, the waliyyu 'l -*amr.* What is the commandment concerning such a position? Did Islam make a specific commandment about this matter, or did it choose to remain completely silent? And if it did make a specific commandment, what was it? Or did it leave the choice to the people to elect after the Prophet anyone they wanted to, and is obedience to him then an obligation to others (who did not elect him)? Or did the Prophet nominate a specific person before his death to take his place in this great and important position ?

Here we shall go into the Prophet's social dealings among his *ummah* according to what can be inferred from the Qur'an.

From the Qur'an, and from the *sunnah* as well and the life of the Prophet, it can be shown that in this matter the Prophet held together in his person three positions among the Muslims.

First, he was the Imam, the leader and the authority in the *din;* he held the *wilayah* of the

Imamate, and his speech and actions were his guarantee and his proof.

وَمَا آتَيكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا .

(الحشر ٥٩/٧)

Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back (59:7).

Second, he held juridical *wilayah;* in other words, his judgement was binding in legal differences and internal disputes.

فَلاَ وَرَبِّكَ لاَ يُؤمِنونَ حَتَّى يُحكِّمُوكَ فِيما شجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لاَ يَجِدُوا فِي انْفُسِهِمْ حَرجاً مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيماً .

(النسآء ٤/٦٥)

But no, by Thy Lord! they will not believe until they make you a judge of the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission (4:65).

Of course, it is true that in this case, it is also an example of the previous instance of the use of the term *wilayah,* but we have not yet

seen this term actually used in the meaning of juridical *wilayah..*

Third, he had social and political *wilayah.* That is, apart from being the explainer and propagator of the commands, and apart from being the judge for the Muslims, he was the statesman and the ruler of the Muslim community, he was the *waliyyu 'l-amr* of the Muslims and the holder of authority in the Muslim community, as we have said before;

اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ. (الاحزاب ٣٣/٦)

The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves (33:6).

اَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ.

(النسآء، ٤/٥٩)

Obey Allah, obey the Messenger and those in authority over you (4:59)*,*

are relevant here. Of course, the Prophet held a fourth rank also, which we shall mention later.

The Prophet formally governed the people, and he was the leader of the policies of the Islamic community. According to this *ayah:*

خُذْ مِنْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا .

(التوبة ، ٩/١٠٣)

Take of their wealth a freewill offering, clense them and purify them thereby (9:103),

he took taxes from the people; he administered the financial and economic affairs of the Islamic community.

This situation, from the three kinds of positions that the Prophet held, is a basis for the discussion of the caliphate.

It is necessary to say here that the word 'Imamate', as well as having the meaning of leadership, is also used to mean a leader in reach ing the ways of the *din;* that is to say, the word "Imam" is said and understood as `someone from whom one should obtain the ways of the *din',* and the Sunni Muslims generally apply the word `Imam' to Abu Hanifah, ash-Shafi'i, Malik and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It is also much used in the sense of social and political leadership.

The Prophet said

ثَلاثٌ لاَ يُغِلُّ عَلَيْهِنَّ قَلْبُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ : اِخْلاَصُ الْعَمَلِ لِلّٰهِ ،

وَٱلنَّصِيحَةُ لأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ، وَٱللُّزُومُ لِجَمَاعَتِهِمْ :

> In connection with three things, the heart of a Muslim will never permit treachery and doubt. Purity of intention before Allah, wishing good for a leader (Imam) of the Muslims in the way of leading the Muslims, (and) support for the community of Muslims.

`Ali, peace be upon him, in one of his letters which are recorded in *Nahju 'l-balaghah* says:

فَإِنَّ أَعْظَمَ الْخِيَانَةِ خِيَانَةُ الأُمَّةِ ، وَأَفْظَعَ الْغِشِّ غِشُّ الأَئِمَّةِ

> The greatest treachery is treachery to the community, and the most abominable deceit is deceit with the leaders (Imams) of the community;

because the result of this deceit is against the Muslims. If the captain of a ship steers the ship on a good course, and then someone comes who misleads the captain and involves the ship in some danger, he has not only been treacherous to the captain, he has betrayed all those on board the ship. In this sentence, then, the word `Imam' is used in the sense of social leader.

In the history of Islam we read that the Muslims, even those who acknowledged the true Imams, addressed the caliphs of their time using the word Imam. The problem is that an Imam in this meaning is sometimes an Imam of justice and sometimes an Imam of oppression, and the Muslims have (different) obligations when faced by each one of these.

The Prophet said, in an authentic *hadith* reported by both schools:

أَفضَلُ الْجِهادِ كَلِمَةُ عَدْلٍ عِنْدَ إِمامٍ جائِرٍ.

> The most excellent *jihad is* (to utter) a word of justice in front of an oppressor.

And, similarly, the .Prophet said

آفَةُ الدِّينِ ثَلاثَةٌ : إِمامٌ جائِرٌ، وَمُجتَهِدٌ جاهِلٌ ، وَعالِمٌ فاجِرٌ.

> The blight of the *din is* three things. An oppressive leader (Imam), and ignorant worshipper of Allah, and a sinful *`alim* (scholar).

More important than this, in the Qur'an itself leaders are mentioned who invite people to the Fire of Gehenna, and they are also designated by the word of Imam.

وَجَعَلْنَا هُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ. (القصص ، ٢٨/٤١)

And we made them Imams who call to the Fire (28:41).

Of course, there is no doubt that usually the word `Imam' or `Imams' is applied to just and pious leaders, and in Shi'ite parlance, the word is applied to those who lead to Allah who are immune from sin -and these are only twelve.

D. Wila'-Tasarruf

Wila '-tasarruf (free universal determination), or spiritual wila', is the highest of the stages of *wilayah.* The other kinds of *wilayah* are either connected to the degree of nearness to the Prophet, to the abundance of the loftiness of the degree of purity, or to the stature of an individual of the Household, or else they are connected to their social or cognitive knowledge. That which has been designated by the word *wilayah* in the two last sections did not stretch beyond the limits of legislation and administration, although the origin and foundation of

the philosophy behind this administration is social and cognitive authority. However, *wila'-tasarruf,* or spiritual *wila' is* a kind of extra-ordinary creative ability and mastery. First we must see what the meaning and semantics of *wilayah-tasarruf* are, and what the ideas of those who believe in it are.

The concept of creative *wilayah,* from one angle, is connected with hidden faculties in this creature who appeared on the face of the earth with the name of man, and with accomplishments which this amazing creature is potentially capable of, and which he can bring up to the level of action. From another angle, it is connected with the relationship of this creature to Allah. The purpose of creative *wilayah is* that man, as a result of travelling on the way of submission, achieves the station of Divine nearness, any the result of his arrival at the station of nearness, naturally to the higher stages of it, that is, human spirituality, which is itself truth and reality, becomes the leader of the caravan of spirituality, the commander of the hearts, the testifier of actions and the Proof of the Age *(Hujjatu 'z-zaman).* The earth is never void of a *wali,* who is the bearer of this spirituality; or, using a different expression, of the

Perfect Man *(al-Insanu l-kamil).*

Wilayah in this meaning is different from prophethood, different from the caliphate, different from guardianship *(wilayah),* and different from the Imamate when it has the meaning of an authority in the commandments of the *din.* Its difference from prophethood, the caliphate and guardianship is an absolute one, but from Imamate it has a conceptual and mentally creative difference.

The meaning of its difference from prophethood, the caliphate and guardianship being absolute is not that everyone who became a prophet, a caliph or guardian was not a *wali,* rather, it means that prophethood, and also the caliphate and guardianship are realities different from *wilayah.* Notwithstanding this, the great prophets, and especially their Seal, were possessors of universal Divine *wilayah.*

And the meaning of its difference from Imamate being mentally-created is that there is only one station. Considering it from one direction it is called Imamate, and from another direction it is called *wilayah.* But the meaning of Imamate is a wide one. Imamate means leadership, but an authority in the commandments of the *din* is a leader; a political and social

leader is also a leader; and a teacher of the inner self, a spiritual guide, is also a leader for the innermost heart.

From the Shi`ite point of view, from which the question of wilayah is under consideration, it can be viewed from three aspects; and in each of the three aspects the word Imamate has been used.

Firstly, from the political point of view, who was the person who most merited and was fittest to assume the place of the Prophet in social and political leadership of the Muslims? And who had to be the leader (*za`im*) of the Muslims after the Prophet? There is also the fact that the Prophet, on behalf of Allah, appointed `Ali to that social position. This point of view, in the present instance, has a historical and dogmatic aspect, and is not being looked at from the point of view of pure knowledge.

Secondly, as far as the commandments of the *din* are concerned, on whom does the authority for reference fall? And in which way has this person acquired his knowledge? And is this person incapable of erring as far as the commandments are concerned, or not? This aspect has a dogmatic side to it as well as being a question of knowledge.

Thirdly, from the point of view of the spirit and the inner self, the Shi`ite view is that at all times there is no Perfect Man who has the power of penetrating what is hidden, and he is a witness for the spirits, the souls and the hearts, and he has a kind of creative control over the world and over man. He is always in existence, and for this reason he is called *hujjah* - proof, guarantee. As was said, the *ayah:* "The Prophet has a greater claim on the believers than they have on themselves" (33:6) is not very far from this subject, and it also bears witness to this meaning of *wilayah.*

The meaning of *wilayah-tasarruf* or creative *wilayah* is not what some ignoramuses have supposed, namely, that one man from humanity obtained the position of guardianship and protectorship with regard to the world in such a way that he becomes the turner of the earth and the heavens, the creator, the sustainer, the life -giver, and the bringer of death on behalf of Allah.

Although Allah arranged the world according to the regularity of cause and effect, and although creatures which the Qur'an calls angels were, by Allah's permission, "those who regulate the affair" (79:5) and "the partitioners"

(51:4), this consideration is in no way contradictory with Allah's not taking a partner in His supreme authority and creative power: and, similarly, it does not contradict the fact that no being can ever be deemed a *wali* in the sense of a companion or an assistant to Allah or even a tool or instrument of Allah.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي المُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ
وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيراً. (الاسراء، ١١١/١٧)

Who has not any associate in the Kingdom, nor any protector to save Him from disgrace; and magnify Him with repeated magnificats (17 :111) .

The relationship of the created to the Creator is not anything other than createdness, absolute dependence and nothingness. The Qur'an, in the same way as it makes Allah known to the highest limit of self-sufficiency, and in the same way as it says, for examples;

اَللهُ يَتَوَفَّى الأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا. (الزمر ٤٢/٣٩)

Allah takes the souls at the time of their death (39:42).

also proclaims:

قُلْ يَتَوَفَّيكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ (السجدة ٣٢/١١)

Say: `Death's angel, who has been charged with you, shall gather you " (32 :11) .

اَلَّذِينَ تَتَوَفّيهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي اَنْفُسِهِمْ. (النحل ١٦/٢٨)

Those whom the angels take while still they are wronging themselves (16 :28).

The Qur'an, at the same time as it says;

اِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيظٌ . (هود، ١١/٥٧)

My Lord is Guardian over everything (11:57).

وَ يُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّى إِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا . (الانعام، ٦/٦١)

He sends recorders over you till, when anyone of you is visited by death, Our messenger takes him (6:61) .

In this *ayah,* He distinguishes the prophets both as guardians and also as takers of souls.

So, from the point of view of *tawhid* (Divine Unity), there is nothing preventing the existence of means, or the ascribing of the carrying out of commands to other than Allah, but by the permission of Allah and by the will of Allah, in such a way that those who carry out and execute are themselves the very command and will of the Lord.

At the same time, good Islamic thinking first of all requires that we do not associate the creation, and giving and taking of life, and instances of these, to other than Allah; because the Qur'an forces us to pierce through the ways and the means and to gain access to the original source, to turn our attention to Him Who accomplishes the labour of the whole world, to see that the means are His creation, the execution of His command, and the manifestation of His wisdom. Secondly, the order of the universe is, from the point of view of means, a special order which Allah created, and man will never, as the result of his own evolution, take the place of any of the means of Divine bounty. Rather, he himself will take the bounty through these very means; that is to say, an angel will inspire

him, and an angel will become an agent of his preservation, and an agent of the taking away of his soul. And yet at the same time it is possible that the station of nearness and freedom of existence of that man be sometimes higher and greater than that of the angel who is an agent for him.

Another matter is that we cannot exactly determine the limits of the *wilayah-tasarruf*, or creative wilayah of a perfect or comparatively perfect man. That is to say that all the indications of the Qur'an and the knowledge that we have verified, in short, the arrival of man at a level at which his will has a determining control over the universe; but to what extent? Is there no limit, or is there a restriction to the extent? This is a matter which is outside our present undertaking.

The third matter which it is necessary to mention is that wilayah-tasarruf is a question of a degree of obedience which has become entirely cleared of material thoughts. This power is not a power which we call a desire of the heart, or a function of the mind, or someone's willful desire. Basically, a man who is still condemned to the thoughts and desires of his fancy is deprived of such wonders. In a man who is

pure to this extent, his will is never excited by the beginning and preliminaries that excite our will; his will is excited by inward stimulation and beckonings from the unseen. But how and what is the nature of this stimulation and beckoning we do not know, and so such a man "sometimes sits in the highest heaven" and "sometimes does not see as far as his instep.'[21]

However, according to what was revealed in the *ayah* of the Qur'an;

قُلْ لآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِى نَفْعاً وَلاَ ضَرّاً. (الاعراف، ١٨٨/٧)

Say: I have no power to profit for myself, or hurt (7: 188).

it is clear that this means that the original power for all profit and hurt is Allah, and that my ability to profit and hurt myself is also from Allah, not from myself. Anyway, how could it be possible for other men to be, within limits, the masters of their profit and hurt, and for the Prophet to be even less so than other men.

It was necessary to raise these three points in the introduction to the discussion of creative *wilayah.* Since there has been less discussion on this subject, and, moreover, since there are a

number of assertions which stimulate interest and which we shall put forward on this topic, we shall extend the discussion about this matter a little further.

We confess that the acceptance of *wilayah* in this meaning is a little difficult; believing in it is not without its problems, especially since, for our level of understanding, so many explanations for such problems are not satisfying. From time to time people expose the difficulties of the problem and the way in which it is rejected in this manner: "At present, with all the urgent and pressing problems that there are for Muslims, what is the necessity of introducing such difficulties as to whether the Prophet and the Imams have *wilayah-tasarruf* or not?" Some others bring forth their objections and difficulty in another manner which has a religious colouring, and they say that this is an exaggeration, and it is believed to be a super-human, semi-divine degree for a man to have: it associates the work of Allah with what is other than Allah, so it is *shirk* (associating with Allah) and is in opposition to the first Islamic fundamental which is *tawhid.*

The fact of the matter is that we cannot either accept or refute a matter just by our-

selves; whether a concept entails *shirk* or conforms to *tawhid is* not a matter for our desire or free-will, so that anything we want to stick the word *tawhid* onto we can. There are many precise criteria in the Qur'an and from the proofs of reason. Islamic teachings on matters concerned with *shirk* and *tawhid* emanate from the summit and the highest-degree of self-mastery, beyond the conceptualization of the ordinary individual. The question of whether one matter is more urgent and more pressing than another is also a fundamental matter, but it is not the only criterion of necessity that one matter in one epoch is discussed more, and so more people have the impression of its necessity. It is a mistake if we always imagine that the impressions of necessity are the same as the necessities themselves.

To what extent the Qur'an emphasizes a matter in the presentation of a problem and in its teaching is in itself a criterion which must at all times be something to be made use of. The problem of creative *wilayah* is one of the problems associated with man and human powers. The Qur'an lends great importance to man, human powers and the extraordinary aspects of his nature, and, in discussions which

we shall, *insha' Allah,* set forth in our book *Man in the Qur'an*[22], we shall deal with this subject.

Here, it is sufficient that we give a summary indication of this problem and make clear the foundations of this idea, with attention to the meaning and understanding of the Qur'an; so that the ordinary person should not imagine that this is, so to speak, an "occult " subject.

With this kind of problem, which may sometimes seem irrelevant to our understanding, we get nearer to the truth if we find fault within ourselves rather than if we reject the matter.

There is no doubt that the subject of *wilayah* in its fourth meaning belongs to gnosis (*`irfan)*, but it has not been proved that since something belongs to gnosis, it must be declared null and void. This matter belongs to gnosis, which, from the point of view of Shi`ism, is also an Islamic matter. Shi'ism is a school of Islam, and *`irfan* is a way; at this point this school and this way (irresective of the superstitions with which the latter is cluttered) coincide with one another. And if, necessarily, it is agreed that it be said that one of these two was derived from the other, by the verdict of indisputable historical circumstances it is defi-

nicely `irfan which produced an adaptation of Shi`ism and not the other way round. In any case, we shall explain the foundations and bases of this consideration in an abridged form.

The most important problem which must be dealt with in this area is the problem of nearness and approach to Allah. We know that in Islam, perhaps in every revealed religion, the spirit of the precepts which must be carried out is a determination to `approach near', and the extreme result which can be attained through action is proximity to the essence of Oneness. So we shall begin the discussion itself with the meaning and understanding of `nearness'.

WHAT DOES NEARNESS TO ALLAH MEAN?

Our familiarity with the derived and colloquial meanings that we use in social life often results in error and mistake. It happens that words which are used in Islamic sciences have abandoned their real meaning, and have found a derived and commonly used meaning.

Now, when we use the word `nearness' outside of its colloquial meaning, we intend it in its real meaning: that is, we may say: `there is a spring near that hill', or `I myself went near that hill'. Here we are using `near' in its real sense. That is to say that we really do conceive of distance and nearness as the intermediate space as far as the hill, and we use the word

`nearness' to indicate that that distance - which is a real fact, not just something we have agreed upon - has been reduced.

But when we say that so-and-so is close or near to someone of eminence in society, or we say that so-and-so, because of some service he rendered, became close to this or that person of social standing, what do we mean? Is the meaning that the distance between the two has decreased; for example, before he was within five hundred metres and now he is within a hundred metres? Of course not; if it were so, than a servant in someone's house would automatically be more favoured than anyone else in nearness to him. Our meaning is rather that the servant, as a result of his service, influences his master's state of mind, and thus the latter becomes pleased with him when before he was not pleased, or he becomes more pleased, and in the end, because of this, the master bestows more favour on him than before. So the use of nearness here is a figurative use, not a literal one; in reality, the external existence of one person is not fixed in nearness to the external existence of another. Rather, because of the special psychological relationship which exists between the master and the servant and its

effects, which in this particular relationship derive from the psychological situation, the term `nearness' is defined figuratively and by comparison.

What, then, is `nearness' to the Being of *al -Haqq* ? is it literal nearness or figurative nearness? Are the slaves of Allah, through submission, worship, conduct and purity moving up towards Allah, and thus becoming nearer to Him? Is the distance between them becoming shorter; to that point at which distance vanishes, and, in the Qur'anic expression, "meeting with the Lord" (*liqa'u'r-rabb*) takes place? Or, if all these expressions are figurative expressions, then what is `approaching near to' Allah? Of course, Allah has no nearness or distance. Nearness to Allah is exactly like closeness to someone of social eminence; that is to say, Allah acquires satisfaction from His slave, and, in the end, His grace and favour is returned and it increases.

Of course, another question then arises, and that is: what is Allah's satisfaction? Allah is not a locus of events such that He could be dissatisfied with someone, and later become satisfied, or be satisfied with someone and then become dissatisfied. Inevitably the answer comes

that the expressions `satisfaction' and 'dissatisfaction' are also figurative expressions, the object of works for Divine mercy and favour which come in the form of obedience and devotion and nothing else.

So what is this mercy and favour? Here there are different reasonings. Some divide mercies and favours generally into spiritual and material. Spiritual blessings, for example, wisdom and the joy acquired through it, and material blessings, for example, the Garden of Paradise, the maidens and palaces (of Paradise). Others, even though they acknowledge spiritual mercies, also reject them, and confine the favours and positions of men in nearness to Allah to the Garden, the physical paradises, the maidens and palaces, apples and pears." The result of the argument of the latter group is that the meaning of `the friends (wali) of Allah' becoming closer to the Being of Oneness is that he has the right to more maidens, palaces, apples, pears, garden and orchard than another person.

The meaning of what the deniers of true nearness say is that, the result of devotion and worship is not that there is a difference in the relation of Allah to His slave (as the supporters

of real nearness also acknowledge in this matter), and not that there is a difference in the relation of the slave to Allah. From the point of view of nearness and distance the foremost individuals of the human world, the Prophet, and the most wretched of them, such as Pharaoh or Abu Jahl[24] are equal.

The truth of the matter is that this confusion originates from a kind of materialistic thinking about Allah and man, especially about man. Someone who only knows man as a heap of water and clay, and does not wish to acknowledge the fundamental;

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي (الحجر، ١٥/٢٩)

So when I have shaped him and breathed My Spirit into him (15:29),

and does not even want to consign a figurative meaning to this expression, has no remedy against the denial of real nearness to *al-Haqq*.

But what need is there for us to suppose that man is so lowly and mundane that we are forced to give everything an allegorical explanation and justification? Allah is pure perfection and infiniteness, and from the point of view of

reality existence is the same as perfection, and every true perfection returns back to the reality of existence which is true reality, as with knowledge, power, life, will, mercy, goodness, and more.

Existents, in the source of their creation, in every respect in which they share in a more perfect existence, that is to say, a more powerful and stronger existence with the Divine Essence which is absolute existence and pure transcendence, are nearer; naturally the angels are nearer to Allah than inanimate things and plants, and similarly some angels are more in advance than others. Some have control over and are obeyed by others: and remoteness is connected with the source of creation, and, as they say, is connected with the arc of descent.

Existents, especially man, according to;

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ. (البقرة، ٢/١٥٦)

surely we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return (2:156),

return to Allah. Man, according to the degree of his existence, must make that return in the form of obedience and in acts of free-will and the accomplishment of his duty, and in the

form of choice and liberty. Man truly passes through stages and degrees of nearness to his Lord by travelling the way of obedience to his Lord; in other words he journeys from the station of animality to the station above the angels. This ascension and rising is not a matter of formality and routine, it is not an arrangement or a construct of our minds, it is not a kind of promotion from simply belonging to some ministry to being a minister, or from simply being a party member to being a party leader, rather it is an ascendence of the ladder of existence, which is the same thing as the increasing and completion of knowledge, power, life, purpose, will, extending the bounds of penetration and possession. "Nearness to Allah" means really passing through the degrees and stations of being and becoming nearer to the infinite centre of being.

Therefore, it is impossible for man, as a result of devotion, servitude, and travelling the path of submission not to reach the station of the angel, not to go higher than the angel, or at least not to share to the same extent as the angel in the attainments of being. In order to make clear the station of man, the Qur'an has said

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيسَ.

(البقرة، ٢/٣٤)

We said to the angels: "Bow yourselves down to Adam!" So they bowed themselves, save Iblis, who refused (2:34).

Truly, it must be said, the repudiator of the station of man, whoever he may be is Iblis.

* * *

THE OUTWARD LIFE AND THE LIFE OF MEANING

Man has, within his outward, animal existence, a spiritual life. Man's spiritual life, the preparedness for which is in every individual, originates in the growth and perfection of his actions and aims. The perfection and felicity of man, and hence his descent and wickedness, are dependent on his spiritual life which is related to his actions and intentions and goals and to what aim and purpose he progresses by the vehicle of his deeds.

Our attention to the precepts of Islam is only from the direction related to individual and social mundane existence. However, there is no doubt that Islamic precepts are saturated

with a philosophy of life covering all matters. Islam never despises the problems of life or deems them of no significance. From the point of view of Islam, spirituality has no separate existence from life in this world. Just as, if the spirit became separate from the body it would no longer belong to this world and another world would have to determine its destiny, spirituality separate from life also does not belong to this world, and talk of spirituality subtracted from life in this world is absurd.

But it must not be thought that the philosophy of Islamic precepts is confined to questions of this life; not at all. At any rate, the application of these precepts is the means of travelling the path of servitude and journeying on the way of nearness and of perfecting existence. Man has a movement towards inward perfection which is outside the limits of the body and matter and individual and social life, and has its source in a chain of spiritual stations. Man, by his submission and sincerity, takes part in that movement. He witnesses, sometimes in this world, and, if not, in the next world where the veils have been removed, all the stations which he passes through, which are these stations and degrees of nearness,

and in the end of *wilayah*.

Prophethood and Wilayah:

al-`Allamah at-Tabataba'i has written:

The commands and principles of the *din,* one section of which are these social regulations, form, exoterically, a series of social concepts, and the connection of these with felicity and wretchedness in the next world, or, in simple religious terminology, with the blessings of Paradise and the afflictions of Hell, depends on realities which come into existence by means of the practice of these principles and regulations or the non-practice of them by man, and which are stored behind the curtains of perceptions, and become manifest and revealed after his transition to the second coming forth (the life of the next world) and the tearing of the curtains of heedlessness and the veil of egoism. So underneath the veil, the social life which man spends in the observance of religious principles is a living event and a spiritual life, in which the blessings of the next world and its everlasting felicities originate.

Or, expressed in another way, they are its phenomenalization. This is a fact and reality which has been given the name *wilayah. Nubuwwah* (prophethood) is a reality which gains access to the religious commandments and Divine precepts related to life, and imparts them to people, and *wilayah is* a reality which comes into existence as the result of the putting into practice in man of what was caused to descend through the Prophet and the Divine precepts.

Imam - The Bearer of Wilayah:

Concerning the testimony relating to *wilayah* and its bearer, the Imam, and the fact that the human world is never without a man who is the bearer of *wilayah* (the Perfect Man), al-`Allamah at-Tabataba' i has written

> In proving and making certain the way of *wilayah* in which man travels through the degrees of inward perfection, and becomes a dweller in the station of Divine nearness, there can be no doubt, because the exoteric aspects of the *din* cannot be conceived of

without an inward reality; and the scheme of the Creator, Who provided man with the exoteric aspects of the *din* (practical, ethical and social precepts) and Who summoned him to His side, will necessarily make ready this inward reality which is the link between the exoteric aspects of the *din* and the station of the spirit; and the evidence which gives instruction in the human world through the witness and perpetuity of prophethood (the *shari`ahs* and the commandments) and establishes the regulations of the *din* also gives guidance through the evidence, perpetuity and actuality of the establishment of *wilayah.* So how is it conceivable that one of the levels of *tawhid,* or one of the commandments of the *din* actually has a living mandate as long as the inward reality which it necessitates does not exist, or as long as the link between the world of man and that level is severed. Someone who is the holder of the degrees of nearness, and is the leader of the caravan of the people of *wilayah,* and preserves the link between humanity and that reality is called, in the language of the Qur'an, Imam." The Imam is someone

who has authority on behalf of Allah *(al-Haqq),* may He be praised, for leadership in the way of *wilayah,* and who has taken the reins of spiritual guidance into his hands *Wilayah,* which makes the hearts of the slaves of Allah shine, is the rays and beams of light from the centre of light which is with Him, and strewn blessings -particles from the shoreless sea which is near to Him.

In *Usul al-Kafi,* in the chapter, "The Imams are the Light of Allah", it is narrated from Abu Khalid al-Kabuli that he said: "I asked al-Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) about this *ayah :*

فآمِنُوا بِاللهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا . (التغابن ، ٦٤/٨)

Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Light which We have sent down (64:8).

The Imam then expounded on the meaning of this *ayah* and said: `By Allah, O Abu Khalid, the Light of the Imam in the hearts of the people of *iman* (who are under the influence of his sovereignty) is brighter than the light of the sun during the day.' "

The meaning is that it is a great mistake to restrict the purpose, the intention, the inward and outward aspects of the precepts of the *din* only to the results that ensue according to the perspective of this life; and to interpret nearness to Allah, which is the direct result of the true practice of these actions, as a derived or figurative matter of the same kind of nearness to the "Lords of wealth and power" in this world, without there being an active design in the spiritual, real life of man, and without it raising him, in reality, up the ladder of existence. Those who really become close to the centre of being, naturally enjoy its benefits, and these are the ones who are fully conversant with the world of man and who take within their authority the spirits and hearts of others, and are the witnesses of the deeds of others.

Fundamentally, every existent who takes a step forward on the path of the completion of his own destiny, and travels through one of the stages in the perfection of his self, walks the road of approach to *al-Haqq.* Man is also an existent in this world, and the way to his perfection is not only that he should progress, so to speak, in what is today called civilization – that is, a series of sciences and technical skills

which are effective and useful in the amelioration of this life, or a series of customs and traditions which are requisites of the improved life of society. If we envisage man only on this level, then this really is what it is all about, but man has another way, another future, which is obtained through the refinement of the soul and through acquaintance with the ultimate goal, that is to say, with the Most Purified Essence of Unity.

* * *

FROM HUMAN SERVILITY TO DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

Is it an offensive thing to say, from human servility to Divine Lordliness ? Is it not possible for the slave to leave the boundary of his servility and take two steps within the Divine boundary?

In the words of Mahmud Shabistari

سیه روئی ز ممکن در دو عالم

جدا هرگز نشد والله اعلم

Non-being is not divorced from the contingent

In the two worlds: Allah is All-wise.[26]

True, but the meaning of `Lordliness' is godliness, not God. Every person who has power is the `Lord' over those things which are under his influence and in his possession. `Abdu '1-Muttalib said to Abrahah who had arrived with the intention of destroying the Ka'bah: "I am the lord (owner) of the camels (to claim which I have come to you), but the House has itself a Lord (to defend it) .[27]

We found the above expression from following a famous *hadith* which is found in *Misbahu 'sh-shari`ah.* In that *hadith* it is said;

اَلْعُبُودِيَّةُ جَوْهَرَةٌ كُنْهُهَا الرُّبُوبِيَّةُ

> "Servility is a jewel whose centre is Sovereignty,"

which means: Indeed, being the slave of Allah and travelling on the path of nearness to *al-Haqq is* a jewel whose centre is lordship, that is, power and strength.

Man always was, and still is, seeking to find a way to have mastery over himself and the world.

For the present we are not interested in the matter of which way to take for this purpose, nor in what leads to success or failure in that way. But among these way there is one

way which has a marvellous condition, in this sense that man, alone, takes this way, without having the formerly mentioned aim, that is his aim is not to gain power and control over the world; but rather his aim is at the opposite extreme to this aim, that is his aim is self-abasement, humility, self-annihilation and non-being, this amazing way is the way of servility.

آن کس که تو را شناخت جان را چه کند؟
فرزند و عیال و خانمان را چه کند؟
دیوانه کنی هردو جهانش بخشی
دیوانهٔ تو هردو جهان را چه کند؟

What can that person who has known You
do with his soul?
What can he do with his children, his
family, his home?
You make him dilerious and You give him
the two worlds,
What can someone who is dilerious for
You do with both the worlds?

Stations and Stages:

Sovereignty, lordship, and *wilayah,* in other

words, perfection and power, which are allotted to mankind as a result of servility, sincerity and true worship, have stations and stages.

The first stage is the giving of inspirffion and the giving of control to man over his own soul. In other words, the smallest sign of the acceptance of man's deeds by Allah is that first of all he earns a penetrating insight, he becomes radiant and clear-sighted. The Qur'an says:

إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَاناً . (الانفال ، ٨/٢٩)

If you fear Allah He will assign you a salvation (8:29).

It also says

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا . (العنكبوت ، ٢٩/٦٩)

But those who struggle in Our cause, surely We shall guide them in Our ways (29:69).

Secondly, man conquers and subdues his own soul and physical forces; man's will-power becomes powerful over his bodily and animal desires; he becomes the master of his own

existence; he acquires merited control within the limits of his own existence. The Qur'an says

إِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ.

(العنكبوت، ٢٩/٤٥)

Prayer forbids indecency and dishonour (29:45).

About fasting, it says:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

(البقرة، ٢/١٨٣)

Prescribed for you is the Fast, even as it was prescribed for those who were before you so that you may guard against evil - haply you will fear Allah (2:183).

And about both forms of worship, it says:

يآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ.

(البقرة، ٢/١٥٣)

O you who believe! Seek your help in patience and prayer (2:153).

In this stage of servility, that which become man's lot is that through a kind of insight

man's bodily passions and tendencies are conquered. In other words, the first effect of servility is sovereignty and *wilayah* over the carnal soul.

The second state is control and *wilayah* over various thinking processes, that is, control over the imagination.

The faculty of the imagination is one of our most astonishing powers. By virtue of this faculty, our mind can at any instant turn its attention from one subject to another, and, so to speak, take the form of an association of ideas or a chain of mental phenomena. This faculty is not under our control, rather we are surprisingly under its control, and so whatever we may want, it is impossible for us to fix our minds on one determined subject so that our attention does not turn to something else. Without control, the faculty of the imagination pushes us in this direction, then in that. For example, however much we want to have presence of mind in prayer, that is to say, however much we want to keep this student present at the top of the class of prayer, we cannot. All at once, we understand that the prayer has reached its end, and that the student was absent during the whole period.

The Prophet makes an elegant comparison in this matter. He compares the heart - the heart of someone who is overcome by his imaginative powers - to a feather which is hanging from a tree in a desert, and which every breath of wind blows to and fro. He said:

مَثَلُ القَلْبِ، مَثَلُ رِيشَةٍ فِي الْفَلاةِ، تَعَلَّقَتْ فِي اَصْلِ شَجَرَةٍ
يُقَلِّبُهَا الرِّيحُ ظَهْراً لِبَطْنٍ

> The heart is like a feather in the middle of an open desert, hanging from a tree and blown to and fro by the wind.

گفت پیغمبر که دل همچون پری است
در بیابانی اسیر صرصری است
باد پر را هر طرف راند گزاف
گه چپ و گه راست با صد اختلاف
در حدیث دیگر آن دل را چنان
کاب جوشان زآتش اندر غازقان
هر زمان دل را دگر رائی بود
آن نه از وی بلکه از جائی بود

The Prophet said *that the heart is like a feather*
In the desert, a captive of a violent blast.
The wind drives the feather recklessly in every direction:
Now left, now right, with a hundred diversities.
In another tradition (the Prophet said) *Deem this heart to be*
As the water boiling in a cauldron from the fire.
At every time the heart has a different resolution.
That (resolution) *is not from it, but from some place.* 28

The other tradition that Rumi indicates in these verses is

لَقَلْبُ ابْنِ آدَمَ اَشَدُّ انقلاباً مِنَ الْقِدْرِ إذا اجْتَمَعَتْ غَلْياً.

Surely, the heart of man is in more upheaval than a pot when it is completely on the boil.

But is man condemned compulsorily and necessarily to be doomed forever to his thinking, and is this mysterious power, which, like a sparrow, is always flying from branch to branch,

to be an absolute ruler over his existence? Or does this condemnation in the face of the imaginative faculty stem from rawness and immaturity? Those who become whole, the people of *wilayah,* are they powerful enough to subjugate this force?

The second alternative is correct; one of the duties of man is to gain mastery over the capriciousness of his imagination. If not, this power of Shaytan (Satan) will give a quality of chance to Allah and to travelling this way to nearness, and will cancel and ruin all the power and ability in man's being.

How great was Rumi who said

جان همه روزه لگدکوب از خیال
وز زیان و سود و از خوف زوال
نی صفا می‌ماندش نی لطف و فر
نی به‌سوی آسمان راه سفر

All day long, from the buffets of fantasy,
And from loss and gain and from fear of decline.
There remains to the soul neither joy, nor grace and glory,
Nor way of journeying to heaven. [29]

گفت پیغمبر که عینای ینام
لا ینام القلب عن رب الانام
چشم تو بیدار و دل رفته به خواب
چشم من خفته، دلم در فتح باب
همنشینت من نیم سایه من است
برتر از اندیشه‌ها پایه من است
زانکه من زاندیشه‌ها بگذشته‌ام
خارج از اندیشه پویان گشته‌ام
حاکم اندیشه‌ام، محکوم، نی
چون که بنا حاکم آمد بر بنی
جمله خلقان سخره اندیشه‌اند
زین سبب خسته دل و غم پیشه‌اند
من چو مرغ اوجم، اندیشه مگس
کی بود بر من مگس را دسترس
چون ملالم گیرد از سفلی صفات
بر پرم همچون طیور الصافات

The Prophet said: "My eyes sleep,
But my heart is not asleep to the Lord of created beings. "
Your eyes are awake and your heart is sunk in slumber,
My eyes are asleep, but my heart is at the opening of the door.
'Tis not I that am seated beside you, 'tis my shadow,
My station is higher than thoughts.
Because I have passed beyond thoughts,
I have become a swift traveller outside of thought.
I am the ruler of thought, not ruled by it,
Because the builder is ruler over the building.
All creatures are subject to thought;
For that reason they are sore in heart and practised in sorrow.
I am as a bird of the zenith, thought is a gnat;
How should a gnat have power over me?
When weariness at the qualities of the low seizes me,
I soar up like birds which spread their pinions. [30]

Let us look at a man like `Ali (a. s.) or Zaynu '1-`Abidin (a.s.) who were so absorbed in Divine reality during their prayer that, for in stance, when they took an arrow out of `Ali's foot, he did not come back from his state of total concentration, and did not notice what had happened. Or the young child or Zaynu '1-`Abidin (a.s.) who, when the latter was in a state of complete absorbtion in worship, fell down from a height and broke his hand. The cries of the children and the women of the house made quite a disturbance, and in the end the bone-setter arrived and set the child's hand. When Zaynu 'l-`Abidin had finished his prayer, that is to say when he had returned from his heavenly journey, his eyes fell on the child's hand, and, astonished, he asked what had happened that it was bandaged up. We can see how these cries and the uproar could not bring the Imam out of his concentration in Divine reality.

Yet let us look at this degree of man. Among their followers, we have seen a number in our life who had such peace of mind and concentration of spirit in the time of prayer that they were assuredly unaware of anything

apart from Allah. Our great and respected teacher, the late Hajj Mirza `Ali Agha Shirazi Isfahani 3l was a man of this degree.

In order to win this victory, there is nothing like worship, whose foundation is concentration on Allah. Self-discipline can be counted among other ways, and, at the most, self-mortification and self-mutilation fall a little into this category, but Islam secures this result from the way of worship without having recourse to these unacceptable practices. Fixing the attention of the heart towards Allah, and meditation on that which is directed towards the Lord of Lords and the Creator and Disposer of all things, prepares the basis of gatheredness of thought and concentration of the mind.

زلف آشفتهٔ او باعث جمعیت ما است
چون چنین است پس آشفته‌ترش باید کرد

His dishevelled lock (of hair) *is the cause of us gathering.*
Since it is this way, then he must make it more dishevelled.

It would be a pity not to mention here something which can help us from the Shaykh of the philosophers of Islam (Ibn Sina), the

prodigy of his time, who, by the grace of the teachings of Islam, took philosophical thought to places where his Greek, Iranian, and Indian predecessors had never reached.

In the ninth section of his *al-Isharat,*[32] after a description of ordinary worship which is done only for reward and has little value, this great man proceeds to worship in its relationship with *`irfan* (gnosis). He says:

"Worship as seen by the people of gnosis is the training of aspirations and faculties, the imagination and thought, which, as a result of repetition and habituation of appearance in the presence of Allah *(al-Haqq),* continually draws them away from attention to problems of nature and matter, towards the preception of *Malakut.* And, in the end, these faculties submit to the secret of the heart and to the innate instinct of man to seek Allah, and become obedient to Him so that whenever he wills that he should engage himself in union with Allah *(al-Haqq),* these powers do not do anything in way of opposition, and do not start a conflict between two desires, a stronger one and a weaker one, and the hidden, inner secret occupies itself with illumination without their interference."

The third station is that the spirit, in its stages of strength, power, sovereignty and *wilayah,* reaches a stage in which, in a great deal of things, it becomes able to do without the body, so that the body is one hundred percent subservient to the spirit.

The spirit and the body are in need, one of the other; the life-force of the body is the spirit, the spirit is the preserver of the form of the body; removing the regulating attachment of the spirit from the body necessitates the corruption and ruin of the body. On the other hand, the spirit, in its activities, is in need of the services of the body; without the use of the limbs and organs and the instruments of the body it would be impossible to do any work. The spirit's not needing the body, in so far as in some of its activities it is not in need of the services of the body, appears sometimes for a few moments and sometimes repeatedly, and sometimes permanent! This is what is known as `divorce from the body'.

Suhrawardi, the famous Hakim Ishragi, said

" We do not recognize a *hakim* (a theosophist) as a *hakim* unless he can practise divorce from the body."

Mir Damad says:

"We do not recognize a *hakim* as a *hakim* unless divorce from the body has become his possession, and every time he wills it, it happens."

As these enquirers after truth have expressed it, divorce from the body is not evidence of great perfection. It is possible that those who still have not crossed over from the world of *mithal* (the world of form) and have not set foot in the hidden world of contemplation may have reached this station.

The fourth station is that his body, in every respect, comes under the control and will of the individual, in such a way that in the realm of his body the individual originates extraordinary actions. This subject gives scope for much discussion.

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, may peace be upon him, said

مَا ضَعُفَ بَدَنٌ عَمَّا قَوِيَتْ عَلَيْهِ النِيَّةُ.

"Nobody is weak in that about which his decision is firm."-i.e., With strong determination, any weakness and feebleness can be overcome.

The fifth station, which is the highest station, is that even the external world comes under the control of man's will as well as becomes obedient to man. The miracles and wonders of the prophets and the *walis* of Allah are in this category.

The problem of miracles and wonders is itself a matter of discussion which must be treated separately by way of explanation. Piety in any of the revealed religions is a pre-requisite for the acceptance of and faith in supernatural phenomena and miracles. For instance, no-one can be a Muslim and believe and have faith in the Qur'an, but deny miracles and supernatural events. From the point of view of Islamic meta-physic, the difficulty concerning a miracle is a difficulty which must be solved; of course, investigating this problem requires the discussion of many preliminaries. Here we shall discuss this matter from the point of view of wilayah-tasarruf and naturally there are some people opposed to what we say who have faith and believe in the Qur'an and admit that miracles take place. What we have to say to those people is directed towards showing that a miracle is part of the manifestations of wilayah-tasarruf and creative wilayah. Leaving aside the Qur'an,

which, in addition to being a miracle, is the word of Allah not the word of the Prophet, and has an exceptional position among all miracles, the occurrence of miracles is due to a kind of power and will which was given to its bearer from Allah so that he can, through the permission and command of Allah, bring about changes in creation: he causes a rod to appear as a serpent, he gives sight to a blind man, he causes the dead to live, he is aware of what is concealed. This power and awareness were given to him only as a result of his following the way of becoming and closeness to the Centre of Being, and wilayah-tasarruf is nothing else but this.

Some people imagine that in the existence of a miracle the individuality and the will of the miracle-doer do not interfere in any way; he is only the cinema screen; the Essence of Oneness, directly and without intermediary, brings it into existence. For if some event reaches the boundary of the supernatural, it is beyond the power of man at whatever level it may be. So wherever a miracle takes place, man has not brought about any change in creation, for it is the Essence of Oneness itself which directly, and without the intermediary of the

will of man, has brought about a change in the universe.

This view is mistaken. Apart from the fact that it denies the sublimeness of the Purest and Unique Being, that physical fact, without intermediary and outside the order of things, should emanate from Him, this concept is against what is explicitly stated in the Qur'an. The Qur'an, in the perfection of its unambiguity, acknowledges its prophets as the bringers of `*ayat* ' (which also means miracles as well as signs), but of course with the leave and permission of the Unique Being. It is clear that the permission of the Unique Being is not of the same kind as human permission which is produced by words or by indication of social or ethical restrictions. The permission of the Lord is this granting of a kind of perfection which is the source of such an effect and if Allah had not willed it He would take this perfection from him.

In the blessed *surah* al-Mu'min, it is written

وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ.

(المؤمن، ٤٠/٧٨)

It was not for any messenger to bring a sign (ayah) *save by the leave of Allah* (40:78).

In this *ayah* it is made known that the bringers of the *ayah* were prophets, but by the leave of the Lord. Specifically, the words `leave of Allah' were added so that it should not be fancied that anyone himself has independence vis-k-vis the Being of Truth, and that all should know that `there is no might and no power except with Allah'. Any common `might or power', from the least to the most, the small to the great, depends on the Holiest Unique Being; every existent, in every stage, is a channel for the Divine Will and Decree and is one of His manifestations. The prophets, in every work, and among them their miracles, are channels, and they are those who fill their pens from the eternal spring of the Unseen.

In the blessed *surah* an-Naml, the story of Sulayman and the Queen of Saba' (Sheba) is told. Sulayman summoned the Queen of Saba', and the Queen set out to present herself to Sulayman. Sulayman wanted from those present in the assembly that her throne should be brought before him before she herself came. Some volunteered, and Sulayman became happy at their way of work, until:

قَالَ ٱلَّذِى عِندَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ ٱلْكِتَابِ اَنَا اٰتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَرْتَدَّ
اِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ (النمل، ٢٧/٤٠)

Said he who possessed knowledge of the Book: "I will bring it to thee before ever thy glance returns to thee (27:40).

The meaning of the Qur'an is that the one who knew said, "I am the one who can bring it in this short space of time'. Therefore he attributed the `might and the power' to himself, and, moreover, it says that "he who possessed knowledge of the Book said . . .'; pointing to the fact that he did this extraordinary feat by virtue of a kind of knowledge, and that kind of knowledge is a kind of science which till now has not been recorded in any human book, it is a knowledge which can only be obtained from the Guarded Tablet, that is, from nearness to the Essence of Truth.

Again, the Qur'an explicitly states, while talking about the same prophet:

فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ تَجْرِى بِاَمْرِهِ رُخَآءً حَيْثُ اَصَابَ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ
كُلَّ بَنَّاءٍ وَ غَوَّاصٍ وَآخَرِينَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِى ٱلْأَصْفَادِ هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا

فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. (ص، ٣٨/٣٦–٣٩)

So We subjected to him the wind, that ran at his commandment, softly, wherever he might light on, and the Satans, every builder and diver and others also, coupled in fetters: "This is our gift; bestow or with-hold without reckoning" (38: 36 -39).

In an *ayah* which was revealed concerning Prophet `Isa - may peace be upon him - the Messiah, mention is made of the meanings of the Qur'an in this matter; we excuse ourselves and refrain from extending the matter through mentioning them.

The point is that according to the Qur'an, *wilayah-tasarruf* in the universe cannot be denied. But if someone wants to, he may inves tigate this subject merely according to the standards of science and philosophy. Of course there are other stories, but these are beyond our present objective.

In the last point which we made at the beginning of this discussion, we explained that all these stations were the result of nearnness to the Lord, and nearness to the Truth is a fact

and a reality, not a figurative explanation, or one depending on perspective.

In the famous and remarkable *al Hadithu l-qudsi,* which both the Shi`ahs and the Sunnis relate, this reality is explained in a very beautiful manner. al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) narrated from the Holy Prophet.

قَالَ ٱللهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: مَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدٌ بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا
افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّافِلَةِ حَتَّى أُحِبُّهُ فَإِذَا
أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ ٱلَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ ٱلَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ،
وَلِسَانَهُ ٱلَّذِي يَنْطِقُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا. إِنْ دَعَانِي
أَجَبْتُهُ، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي أَعْطَيْتُهُ

Allah says: No slave has become near to Me by anything more pleasing to Me than what I have made obligatory on him; and surely he can approach Me through works of supererogation more than what is obligatory on him, until I love him. Then when I love him, I will be his ear through which he hears, his eye through which he sees, his tongue through which he speaks, his hand with which he strikes. If he calls, I will reply to him; if he asks from Me, I will give to him. [33]

In this *hadith* the essence of the matter is set down: worship causes approach, and approach causes belovedness near to Allah; that is to say, by worship man becomes near to Allah, and as a result of this nearness he becomes worthy of special favour, and as a result of that favour his ears and eyes and hands and tongue become , as it were, Divine. By Divine nearnesss he hears, and sees, and speaks and strikes; his supplication is accepted and his request is granted.

The fact is that the spirit of Shi`ism, which distinguishes it from other schools of Islam, and gives it a special Islamic insight for its followers, is the special view of this school concerning Man. On the one hand, it acknowledges that man's powers are truly wonderful, as was pointed out before, and it makes it known that the world of man is never without the being of the Perfect Man in whom the potentialities of man are actualized; and on the other hand, according to the insight of this group, servility is the sole means of arriving at the stations of men, and travelling the way of servility in a perfect and complete manner is not possible except with spiritual favour and with the leader of the caravan,

the Perfect Man, who is the ***wali*** and ***hujjah*** (Proof) of Allah.

For this reason, the *walis* of this school have said

بُنِيَ الإسلامُ عَلىٰ خَمْسٍ : عَلىٰ الصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ وَالصَّوْمِ
وَالحَجِّ وَالوَلاٰيَةِ ، وَلَمْ يُنٰادَ بِشَيْءٍ كَمٰا نُودِيَ بِالوَلاٰيَةِ.

Islam is founded on five things: On *salat,* on *zakat,* on *sawm* (fasting), on *hajj,* and on *wilayah:* and we were not called for anything as we were called to *wilayah.*[34]

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NOTES

1. This is the event which took place on *18th Dhu 'l-hijjah* when the Prophet during the return from his last hajj-pilgrimage gathered all the pilgrims together at a place called Ghadir Khumm and announced 'Ali (a.s.) as his successor. It is on record in many histories, both Sunni and Shi'ah, that the people completely accepted him. (*tr.)*

2. *Tafsir,* at-Tabari, vol. vi, pp. 288 -289.

3. *al-Kashshaf,* vol.i, p.505. (Egyptian edition, 1373)

4. *at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir,* vol.xii, p.30. (Egyptian printing, 1357)

5. This refers to the day when Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was to have met a group of Christians to engage in a kind of contest to verify which of them held the truth. The Qur'an (3:61) mentions this event in which the Prophet was accompanied by al-Imam al-Hasan and al-Imam al-Husayn, Fatimah, and `Ali (a.s.), and refers to the latter as the soul of Muhammad. (tr.)

6. *Rayhanatu 'l-adab* ,vol.v, p.311.

7. See *Polarization Around the Character of Ali ibn Abi Talib,* published by WOFIS, Tehran, 1981. The matter of this book is a discussion of those things in `Ali (as.) which attracted seekers after truth and those thing which repelled the lover of falsity. (*tr.)*

8. Masjidu 'l-Khif below Mina, where the stoning of the three pillars marking Satan and temptation takes place. In Masjidu'1-Khif the Prophet prayed and pilgrims may also go there to pray and to gather to go to Mina.

9. *Rafd* means heresy, and the first Shi`ite groups were known as Rafidites, may be because of their not accepting the first three Caliphs. (*tr.)*

10. The different sects and schools that developed in Islam. (*tr.)*

11. See the Qur'an (4:103) "and hold fast to the rope of Allah".

12. *at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir,* ar-Razi, vol.xxvii, p.166.

13. Nuru 'd-Din `Abdu 'r-Rahman Jami, born in Khurasan in 817 A. H. *(1492* A. D.). He was one of the great figures in Iranian literature and Sufism, and was also a renowned scholar. (tr.)

14. as-Sayyid Nurullah ibn ash-Sharif al-Mar'ashi ash-Shushtari, author of the famous Shi'ah biographical work *Majalisu '1-Mu'minun* (Assemblies of the Believers). He was flogged to death in 1019 A. H. (1610 - 1 1 A. D.) in India by order of the Emperor Jahangir at the instigation of the Sunnis, and was therefore named the

"Third Martyr" (Shahid-e Thilith). *(tr.)*

15. The person who struck `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) with the poisoned sword that killed him. This event took place in the Mosque of Kufah at the morning prayer on *19th Ramadan,* 40 A. H. (661 A. D.) .*(tr.)*

16. Abu Firas, Hammim ibn Ghalib (d. 110/728), a famous Arabic poet in the time of the fourth Imam when Hishim ibn `Abdu 'l-Malik was caliph.

17. These terms are from the terminology of Arabic word formation. The meaning here is that the form of the word would indicate that they are the *wali's* of Allah, but the real meaning is that they are people whose *wali* is Allah, this latter meaning usually being denoted by another verbal root form - *"maf'ul"*. (*tr.)*

18. This has been dealt with in the *Risalah* which Qawamu 'd-Din Jasbi Qummi, one of the learned scholars of the Qum *madrasahs,* compiled on the in structions of Ayatullah Burujardi, and which contains the *isnad* of these ahadith.

19. *as-Sawa'iqu 1-muhriqah,* p.135.

20. *Hilyatu '1-awliya',* vol.i, p.86.

21. A quotation from the Iranian poet Sa'adi.

22. Posthumously published as *Insan dar Qur'an* (Man in the Qur'an) as part four of *Jahanbini-e Islam* (The World-View of Islam) (Qum, 1399/1979). (tr.)

23. Apples and pears, as such, are not referred to in the Qur'an, but we are told that there are fruits in Paradise. (*tr.)*

24. The greatest of the Prophet's enemies in Mecca.

25. Refer to *Tafsir al-mizan,* footnote to *ayah* 124, *surah* 2: "And when his Lord tested Ibrahim with certain words, and he fulfilled them. He said, `Behold, I make you an Imam for the people' " which proves this matter in a most elegant way.

26. Sa'du 'd-Din, Mahmud Shabistari, (d.720/1320) author of *Gulshan-e raz* from which the present verse is taken.

27. See A. Guillaume: Ibn Hisham's *Life of Muhammad* (1955), pp. 24 - 25.

28. *Mathnawi,* bk. iii, 1. 1641-1644 Rumi. (trans. R. E. Nicholson)

29. *ibid.,* bk. i, 1. 411-414.

30. *ibid.*

31. One of the great teachers of recent times. He was a *faqih* of the rank of *mujtahid,* a theosophist, a, gnostic, a *tabib* (traditional doctor) and a writer of excellence. In some subjects, for example, *tibb* (traditional medicine), he was of the highest rank. He was, over and above this, a pious man, a lover of Allah, the Prophet and his family - the blessings of Allah and His peace be upon them.

32. *Kitabu '1-isharat wa 't-tanbihat.*

33. *al-Kafi,* vol. i, p.352.

34. *Wasa 'ilu 'sh-Shi`ah,* vol.i, p.4.

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INDEX 'A'

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